AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. – 66. (Cancelled)

67. (New) A method of forming an image on a printing plate precursor comprising:

providing a printing plate precursor comprising a substrate and a negative working oleophilic image forming layer applied onto the substrate, wherein the image forming layer comprises at least one polymeric material having a hydroxyl, vinyl, acrylate or methacrylate moiety or a combination or derivative thereof;

imagewise contacting the image forming layer with a catalyst comprising an acid; and

thermally treating the image forming layer such that the polymeric material in imagewise contacted portions of the image forming layer undergoes a sufficient crosslinking reaction to cause the imagewise contacted portions of the image forming layer to become less developable in a developer liquid than portions of the image forming layer that are not contacted with the catalyst.

68. (New) The method of claim 67 wherein the polymeric material is capable of self-crosslinking upon thermal treatment in the presence of the catalyst.

69. (New) The method of claim 67 wherein the image forming layer comprises a polymeric material derived from phenol.

70. (New) The method of claim 67 wherein the image forming layer comprises a novolak resin.

71. (New) The method of claim 67 wherein the image forming layer comprises a polymeric crosslinking material.

72. (New) The method of claim 71 wherein the polymeric crosslinking material is capable of undergoing a condensation reaction with a polymeric binder upon thermal treatment in the presence of the catalyst.

73. (New) The method of claim 71 wherein the polymeric crosslinking material is capable of undergoing a condensation reaction with a polymeric binder upon thermal treatment at a temperature range of between about 20 and about 200 °C in the presence of the catalyst.

74. (New) The method of claim 67 wherein the image forming layer comprises a resole resin.

75. (New) The method of claim 74 wherein the resole resin is prepared from a C_1-C_5 alkylphenol and formaldehyde, a tetra C_1-C_5 alkoxymethyl glycoluril, poly(4-methoxymethylstyrene), poly[(N-methoxymethyl) acrylamide], poly[(N-iso-butoxymethyl) acrylamide], or a butylated phenolic resin.

76. (New) The method of claim 67 wherein the image forming layer comprises a novolak resin and a resole resin.

77. (New) The method of claim 67 wherein the catalyst comprises a liquid mixture.

78. (New) The method of claim 77 wherein the liquid mixture comprises polymeric binders, dispersing agents, humectants, biocides, surfactants, viscosity builders, colorants, pH adjusters, drying agents, defoamers or combinations thereof.

79. (New) The method of claim 77 wherein the liquid mixture has a surface tension of between about 20 and about 60 dynes/cm.

80. (New) The method of claim 77 wherein the liquid mixture has a surface tension of between about 30 and about 50 dynes/cm.

81. (New) The method of claim 67 wherein the thermal treatment step comprises heating the image forming layer at between about 20 and about 200 °C.

82. (New) The method of claim 67 wherein the thermal treatment step comprises heating the image forming layer at between about 75 and about 150 °C.

83. (New) The method of claim 67 wherein the thermal treatment step comprises heating the image forming layer at between about 90 and about 130 °C.

84. (New) The method of claim 67 wherein thermal treatment step occurs for between about 15 and about 300 seconds.

85. (New) The method of claim 67 wherein the thermal treatment step occurs for between about 30 and about 90 seconds.

86. (New) The method of claim 67 further comprising the step of contacting the image forming layer with a developer liquid to remove the portions of the image forming layer that are not contacted with the catalyst.

87. (New) The method of claim 86 wherein the developer liquid comprises an aqueous alkaline developer.

88. (New) The method of claim 86 wherein the developer liquid has a pH of at least about 11.

89. (New) The method of claim 86 wherein the developer liquid has a pH of at least about 12.

90. (New) The method of claim 86 wherein the developer liquid has a pH of between about 12 and about 14.

91. (New) The method of claim 86 wherein the developer liquid comprises at least one metal silicate.

92. (New) The method of claim 91 wherein the developer liquid has a ratio of silicon oxide to metal oxide of at least about 0.3.

93. (New) The method of claim 91 wherein the developer liquid has a ratio of silicon oxide to metal oxide of between about 0.3 and about 1.2.

94. (New) The method of claim 91 wherein the developer liquid has a ratio of silicon oxide to metal oxide of between about 0.6 to about 1.1.

95. (New) The method of claim 91 wherein the developer liquid has a ratio of silicon oxide to metal oxide of between about 0.7 to about 1.0.

96. (New) The method of claim 91 wherein the metal silicate comprises lithium silicate, sodium silicate, potassium silicate or a combination thereof.

97. (New) The method of claim 86 wherein the developer liquid is free of organic solvents.

98. (New) The method of claim 86 wherein the developer liquid comprises at least one hydroxide moiety.

99. (New) The method of claim 98 wherein the developer liquid comprises ammonium hydroxide, sodium hydroxide, lithium hydroxide, potassium hydroxide or a combination thereof.

100. (New) The method of claim 86 wherein the developer liquid comprises a combination of a metal silicate and a hydroxide containing compound.

101. (New) A method of forming an image on a printing plate precursor comprising:

providing a printing plate precursor comprising a substrate and a negative working oleophilic image forming layer applied onto the substrate, wherein the image forming layer comprises at least one polymeric material comprising a poly(4-hydroxystyrene), poly(4-hydroxystyrene/methylmethacrylate), poly(2-hydroxyethylmethacrylate/cyclohexyl methacrylate), poly(2-hydroxyethylmethacrylate/methylmethacrylate), poly(styrene/butylmethacrylate/methylmethacrylate/methacrylic acid), poly(butylmethacrylate/methacrylic acid), poly(vinylphenol/2-hydroxyethylmethacrylate), poly(styrene/n-butylmethacrylate/2-hydroxyethylmethacrylate/methacrylic acid), poly(styrene/ethylmethacrylate/2-hydroxyethylmethacrylate/methacrylic acid), poly (N-methoxymethyl methacrylamide/2-phenylethyl methacrylate/methacrylic acid) or combinations or derivatives thereof;

imagewise contacting the image forming layer with a catalyst comprising an acid; and

thermally treating the image forming layer such that the polymeric material in imagewise contacted portions of the image forming layer undergoes a sufficient crosslinking reaction to cause the imagewise contacted portions of the image forming layer to become less developable in a developer liquid than portions of the image forming layer that are not contacted with the catalyst.

102. (New) A method of forming an image on a printing plate precursor comprising:

providing a printing plate precursor comprising a substrate and a negative working oleophilic image forming layer applied onto the substrate, wherein the image forming layer comprises at least one polymeric material comprising a C_1-C_5 alkoxymethyl melamine resin, a C_1-C_5 alkoxymethyl glycoluril resin, a poly(C_1-C_5 alkoxy-methylstyrene) resin, a poly(C_1-C_5-alkoxymethylacrylamide) resin or a derivative or combination thereof;

imagewise contacting the image forming layer with a catalyst comprising an acid; and

thermally treating the image forming layer such that the polymeric material in imagewise contacted portions of the image forming layer undergoes a sufficient crosslinking reaction to cause the imagewise contacted portions of the image forming layer to become less developable in a developer liquid than portions of the image forming layer that are not contacted with the catalyst.